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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000939

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E.O. 12958; DECL: 12/04/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES TRANSNISTRIA TANKS
AND MUNITIONS WITH ACTING PRESIDENT GHIMPU

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: The Ambassador, accompanied by the Defense Attache, met with Speaker and Acting President Mihai Ghimpu on November 17 to respond to a request from Ghimpu to ascertain whether reports regarding the mobilization of Transnistrian tanks and the distribution of Russian arms and ammunition in Transnistria were accurate. The Ambassador told the Acting President that we believed the tanks, whose presence was well known, and the alleged ammunition delivery to be insignificant for military action. Ghimpu accepted the assessment, but expressed concern that the Russians were planning unspecified provocations to justify their continued presence in Transnistria. End Summary.

Tanks and Ammunition

¶2. (S/NF) On November 10, Acting President Ghimpu told the Ambassador that the Moldovan Security and Information Service (SIS) had alleged both a Russian supply of ammunition and weapons to Transnistrian irregular troops and the presence of twenty tanks in village of Vladimorovca, east of Tiraspol. Ghimpu asked the Ambassador to ascertain both the validity and seriousness of the reported information.

¶3. (S/NF) In the November 17 meeting, the Ambassador told Ghimpu that we believed that the presence of Transnistrian tanks and alleged quantities of Russian ammunition and weapons supplied from Colbasna was insignificant. The fact that the tanks were in Transnistria was not new information. In addition, we viewed the distribution of Russian-supplied armaments as insignificant for military activity.

Russian Provocations

¶4. (S/NF) Ghimpu said he agreed with the assessment, but he added that he was Qabsolutely certainQ the Russians were planning some sort of provocation to destabilize the region, especially in light of Alliance for European Integration's (AIE) calls for the replacement of the Russian peacekeeping mission with an impartial, third-party organization. Ghimpu opined that the rumored Russian-supplied armaments, although numerically small, may have actually occurred and were distributed to encourage individuals and

paramilitary forces to conduct provocations along lines of the grenade attack which occurred in Chisinau on October 14, 2009.

¶5. (S/NF) Ghimpu said he believed the Russians could then use such attacks and the discovered presence of such hazardous ammunition as justification for the continuation of the Russian peacekeeping presence. He offered an example of a recent Russian "provocation" where Russian Ambassador Kuzmin asked a group of parliamentarians, including Ghimpu, whether or not Ghimpu would attend the Black Sea Summit. Ghimpu said he declined to answer since he believed the Summit was not appropriate for a president to attend. Both the Ambassador and Ghimpu agreed that Ghimpu's lack of reaction sent a non-provocative reply to the Russians. Ghimpu said that ultimately only time would reveal Russian strategy, and that the Alliance would need to remain vigilant.

¶6. (S/NF) Ghimpu also said some other Alliance leaders knew about the SIS information reported above, but that Deputy Prime Minister Victor Osipov had deliberately withheld the information from Prime Minister Vlad Filat. Ghimpu also said he would pass any additional information about Russian activities to the Ambassador.

Presidential Vote and Possible New Constitution

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¶7. (S/NF) The Ambassador then asked about the progress regarding the presidential vote. Ghimpu believed that the Alliance would not obtain enough votes to elect a president and that only changes to the constitution would permit the election of a new president. He had recently founded an exploratory commission to examine possible changes to the constitution and to then propose changes for a public referendum. Ghimpu said he wanted "a good, solid constitution," and that one issue under examination was the language in which it would be written, either Russian or Moldovan.

CHAUDHRY